

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 11, line 11 with the following paragraph:

The small skin incision 104 is made at an entry site 442 for a guide wire 114. The introducer sheath 100, together with a tapered vessel dilator 116, as an assembly, is threaded onto a proximal end of the guide wire 114. The introducer sheath 100 and vessel dilator 116 are advanced in the direction of an arrow 118, through the subclavian fascia 120 and into the subclavian vein 122, until a short length (e.g., 2 to 8-cm) of the introducer sheath 100 and vessel dilator 116 remain exposed along with the wire guide 114, as shown in FIG. 15.